

EDINBURGH HARVEIAN FESTIVAL.

THE 115th Harveian Festival was held in the Hall of the Royal College of Physicians on Friday, May 14th, when Mr. JOSEPH BELL delivered the oration on Some Harveian Gleanings.

After expressing his thanks for the honour done in calling him to the presidential chair, the orator referred to the connection between the Harveian Society and the Bell family. His great-grandfather, Benjamin Bell, was an original member 115 years ago; his grandfather, Joseph, was a guest 60 years ago; and his father, Benjamin, was President 30 years ago. He next referred to the death of an old Harveian, Dr. T. Graham Weir, during the past year. He "was one of those happy souls who see what is best and brightest in others..... We all miss his hearty laugh, his appreciation of song or story, and his snuff box, which he used so regularly, and was so free in handing to others."

OLD HARVEIANS.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century there was found on the roll of the Society many a name that remains more than a mere *nomina umbra*. Robert Graham, of the Botany Chair; William Pulteney Alison, the physiologist and physician, the courteous and charitable gentleman, the brother of Sir Archibald of the *History of Europe*, the uncle of the second Sir Archibald of the Crimea, India, Ashanti, and Egypt; Sir George Ballingall, the Professor of Military Surgery in the University; Robert Hamilton, one of the founders of the Eye Infirmary; Robert Christison, *ultimus Romanorum*; Richard Huile, the gentle bard, who at a great age still remained an examiner of the College of Surgeons, in the fine old days when every examiner felt himself competent to examine in each and all of the subjects; John Thatcher, the famous obstetrician; James Begbie, the gifted father of a more gifted son, Warburton, the "beloved physician"; David MacLagan, that splendid specimen of a Scotch gentleman and family doctor, who left seven gifted sons, the eldest of whom, Sir Douglas, is still with us; Samuel Pagan, the discoverer of Pagan's corner, who fought at Waterloo, and left an ear on the field of battle, an ear which produced as much wit as Jenkin's ear bloodshed; Archibald Inglis, a noted classical scholar; John Smith, the uncle of the President of the Royal College of Physicians (Batty Tuke).

James Syme and Andrew Wood entered in 1837, a great year for the Harveian, for in that year Douglas MacLagan also entered, and now he is celebrating his diamond wedding, his jubilee and ten years more. In 1850 the Society determined to admit country Fellows, and one of the first of these was a young man from Cramond named George William Balfour.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SOCIETY.

The functions of the Society, in addition to the promotion of good-fellowship and the keeping of Harvey's memory green, were the offering of prizes for competition by students and young practitioners, and the delivery of addresses on various subjects by the President before the annual banquet. The subjects given out for the prize essays were sometimes quaint and generally fairly wide—the changes which the blood undergoes in inflammation, the influences of atmospheric pressure on the animal economy, the chemical and medicinal properties of creasote, ergot of rye, deleterious gases, urine in its morbid states, and so on. The subjects of the Harveian Oration had varied much—many had been biographical. In 1839 the laws were revised, and James Young Simpson was admitted a member. In 1842 Professor Traill read the Oration on Servetus, and also upon vapour baths. The connection is obvious, but at dinner the Harveians made up for their sufferings from the address by drinking twenty toasts. In 1845, Douglas MacLagan wrote and sang a splendid ode, in consequence of which he received his diploma as Dr. Hilaritatis. In 1851 our beloved and lamented James Donaldson Gillespie, who did more for the Harveian Society than any other man since its foundation, as member, as Secretary, and as President. By a curious irony of fate, a few years afterwards the Harveians as a body were starved on a famous occasion on which at a certain hotel they had neither room to sit in nor

food to eat. In 1869, Gillespie was elected Secretary, and since that happy day for the Harveian, its members increased, its sphere widened, its dinners improved, and, above all, the *Minutes* assumed an importance apparently previously unknown, and from then wit and wisdom became a prominent feature in the evening's entertainment.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF HARVEY.

Mr. Bell then gave a brief Survey of the Life and work of Harvey. "It was his to do for our knowledge of the circulation of the blood what in later days Charles Bell did for the nervous system, and in our own days Pasteur and Lister, Koch and Metchnikoff have done in bacteriological research." He then proceeded to show (1) what surgeons were doing before Harvey's day; (2) what they were doing about his time; and (3) what improvements in method followed him.

1. The history of the thermometer or thermoscope, from Galileo's invention on to its first practical use by Santorio Sanctorini, the work of George Martine, of Kepler, and others was passed in review. Various writers and their works were referred to, Thomas Gale, Richard Ferris, Fabricius, Riolan the predecessor and opponent of Harvey, Lazarus, Reverius, and others.

2. Richard Wiseman, surgeon during the civil wars, Sergeant Surgeon to Charles II, a clear-sighted able man, whose surgical practice was wonderfully modern. His treatment of varicose veins is that of the present day. He trepanned for gunshot injuries of the head with daring and success, and was assisted by Mr. Alexander Pennycuik, a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and the surgeon to Alexander Leslie, afterwards Earl of Leven. The effects of Harvey's discoveries on Sir Kenelm Digby, one of the most interesting characters in English history, were alluded to. Before Harvey's day Scottish medical men seemed to have written nothing, and after him very little. Scottish historians and the reports of travellers in Scotland have left the healing art severely alone.

3. By the kindness of Sir Arthur Mitchell, the orator had obtained one or two graduation theses, written after Harvey's publication and under the spell of his great discovery. George Hepburne wrote a "Dissertatio de motu sanguinis per vasa minima," etc., and a "Dissertatio de circulatione sanguinis in animalibus," etc. Johannes Strachan, an Aberdonian Scot, dedicates his thesis to Sir John Middleton, of Fettercairn, in an epistle of most fulsome adulation.

GLIMPSSES OF MODERN DISCOVERIES IN ANTIQUITY.

Mr. Bell then referred to some lost arts, progress forgotten, glimpses of great principles, which only needed time and the man to open wide gates of discovery. Nephrotomy and free incision in empyema were both legitimate operations in the age of Hippocrates. O'Dwyer's intubation tubes were new, yet they, too, were used by the Hippocratic school.

Praxagoras recommended laparotomy and enterectomy, followed by suture, in cases of obstruction where milder means had failed. Heliodorus practised internal urethrotomy. The vaginal specula of the Romans were not much behind those of to-day. Medical rubbers flourished in Rome in Seneca's days. Bacteriology was discovered and allowed to drop more than 200 years ago, when Antony von Leeuwenhoek wrote to the Secretary of the Royal Society describing mouth organisms, and sent a sketch in which bacilli and bacteria, micrococci, and spirillum can be clearly recognised. This was in September, 1683.

A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE.

Mr. Bell concluded. "To-night, Harveians, we have been looking into the past, let us for a moment project our minds into the future; we have admired Galileo and Kepler, Wiseman and Harvey; we have smiled at the touch for the king's evil, at Digby's sympathetic powder. What will the Harveians fifty years hence think of the animal extracts—testiculin for perpetual virility; of antitoxins for every plague; of our proprietary medicines to cure every symptom advertised and distributed by every postal delivery?"

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE ORATOR.

Sir DOUGLAS MACLAGAN proposed, and Sir HENRY P. LITTLEJOHN seconded, a vote of thanks to the President for his excellent oration.

DINNER.

Thereafter the Harveians dined together. "The Queen," and the other loyal and patriotic toasts were given from the Chair, as was also "The Immortal Memory of Harvey." Sir Alexander Christison proposed the health of the honoured guest of the evening, the oldest Harveian present, Sir Douglas MacLagan, who replied, "The Medical Schools of Scotland" was given by the President of the Royal College of Surgeons (Professor Struthers) and replied to by Dr. Renton, of Glasgow. "The President," by Sir Henry Littlejohn; "The Vice-President," by Dr. Crum Brown; "The Secretaries," by Dr. John Smith.

Songs, stories, and recitations added to the pleasure of the evening which as usual closed with *Floreat Res Medica*.

THE PLAGUE.

BOMBAY.

The returns from Bombay are interesting reading in view of the opinion expressed by us, as long ago as December, 1896, that the epidemic of plague would be practically over by the month of May. In the *Times of India* we read that the total number of cases in Bombay in the week ending April 25th was 222, and of deaths 191.

The district of Mandvi, in Bombay, which was the first to be attacked, as was the first reported free of the disease, is again plague stricken. It would appear that the period of recrudescence has begun in that district of the city, and that a continuance may be looked for; it may be of some months' duration. The statistics from Karachi given below show a striking diminution, without at present any signs of recrudescence. The general drift of the spread of the disease is still northward, and many towns in the north-west are suffering severely.

WORK OF THE PLAGUE COMMITTEES.

Meanwhile the Plague Committees in the several towns are prosecuting their efforts with vigour. The work is stupendous, and the patience and tact necessary to get the details carried through without causing a native rebellion are most creditable. Many of the extra-stringent regulations imposed at European ports, more especially Mediterranean, have been removed, but there is much inconvenience caused at Western Indian ports by the prohibition placed upon immigration.

Some months ago a number of merchants from Mombassa, Zanzibar, Delagoa Bay, and other East African ports, came to Bombay to celebrate some wedding festivities. These men, some hundreds in number, were prevented from returning to their homes, and their business and means of livelihood are meantime being ruined. No ayah or personal servant is allowed to leave the harbours, and English families proceeding homewards are thereby seriously inconvenienced. These are necessary restrictions no doubt, but they indicate the thousand and one ways by which strict quarantine regulations affect an epidemic-stricken district.

THE RETURN TO KARACHI.

Our correspondent in Karachi states that those who fled from Karachi during the earlier stages of the epidemic, estimated to number 45,000 or 50,000 persons, began to return about the end of April. Many came from badly infected areas—such as Cutch Mandvi, Sukkur, Hyderabad, etc.—The Plague Committee are taking special precautions to prevent the reinfection of the town. At the large detention camp, situated at Malir (8 miles from Karachi) all persons arriving by train and road are medically examined and disinfected, and, after a detention, which may last for ten days, are, after further disinfection of themselves and baggage, allowed to proceed on their journey. Passengers arriving by sea are similarly detained and disinfected at three large detention camps, which are capable of accommodating over 2,000 persons. The arrangements in these camps are all under commissioned European medical officers, the camps are strictly guarded, and every attention is paid to the accommodation and general well-being of the persons detained, and to the sanitation of the areas. The system by which no house is allowed to be reoccupied until certified as cleaned, disinfected, and fit for human occupation by the Divisional Plague Superintendent, has already been explained.

The military search parties instituted by the Plague Committee carry out their duties in the various quarters of the town. Concealed cases are, however, rarely detected, as the system of compulsory notification in force works well and is understood by the people. Whitewashing and disinfecting are still being rigorously carried on, special attention being paid to the condition of the cesspools, privies, etc., attached to the houses. As before stated, the whole of the Municipal Conservancy arrangements have been reorganised by the Plague Committee. The various units of conservancy establishments and equipments have been placed under the direct personal control of the plague superintendents in charge of the various divisions, a special European supervising staff being provided to check the establishment muster rolls, supervise the work, etc. The new arrangement has worked well. Of the importance of this work there can be no doubt. For instance, the plague has appeared at Cutch Mandvi (a little over twenty-four hours by steamer from Karachi); the disease has shown so virulent a form there that of a population of 20,000 souls nearly 100 are dying per diem.

The Karachi Plague Committee strongly urged Government not to permit passengers to leave Cutch for Karachi, excepting in such numbers as the available detention camps could accommodate. This request Government was unable to comply with. The Plague Committee has therefore had to arrange to have in readiness accommodation for 3,000 persons. The preparation, supervising, guarding, etc., of such large camps is a source of much trouble and expense. Ten days' observation is insisted upon in the case of all arrivals by sea from badly infected areas. As usual, every subterfuge is resorted to by the natives to avoid detention. Instances have occurred in which persons resident in Cutch have obtained Bombay steamer tickets through the intervention of friends travelling from that port.

DECLINE OF THE EPIDEMIC IN KARACHI.

The following are the statistics for Karachi down to the end of April:

	Week ending April 22nd.	Week ending April 29th.
Total death-rate from all causes ...	88.44	59.84
Plague death-rate ...	67.25	45.54
Mean death-rate for corresponding week (5 years) ...	27.01	27.01
Quarters with highest death-rates:		
Runchore ...	336.75	213.08
Garden ...	250.32	133.50
Quarters in which the disease was at first very virulent:		
Old Town ...	5.43	10.86
Napier ...	12.14	6.07
Number of cases of plague ...	182	123
Number of deaths from plague ...	127	86

The total number of cases of plague in Karachi since the date of the outbreak (December 10th, 1896) has been 3,905, and of deaths 3,186.

THE JUBILEE OF ANÆSTHESIA IN JAPAN.—A semicentenary festival in commemoration of the discovery of anæsthesia was held at Tokio on March 4th. Addresses were delivered by Mr. J. Otsaki on the Relation of Foreign Languages and Medicine in Japan; by Professor S. Sato on the History of the Discovery of Anæsthetics; by Dr. C. Ishiguro on Anæsthetics in Japan; by Dr. T. Miwa on Anæsthetic Apparatuses; and by Professor N. Nagai on the Nature of Ether and Chloroform. A large collection of books, pictures, etc., relating to the history of medical science was exhibited. Amongst these the portraits of Simpson, Morton, and Hanaoka excited special interest.

DR. ADOLFO MORENO POZO, a distinguished Spanish surgeon and professor in the University of Madrid was, we regret to learn, assassinated recently when on his way to deliver his lecture in the Colegio de San Carlos.

THIRTY-FOUR residents at Matlock were recently summoned for disregarding orders of previous courts under the vaccination laws. The Bench refused to convict and refused to state a case for appeal.